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## COUNT EDWARD DE CRILLON

ACCORDING to mathematicians, every man carries with him a personal error in his observation of facts, for which a certain allowance must be made before attaining perfect accuracy. In a subject like history, the personal error must be serious, since it tends to distort the whole subject, and to disturb the relations of every detail. Further, the same allowance must be made for every authority cited by the historian. Each has his personal error, varying in value, and often unknown to the writer quoting him. Finally, the facts themselves carry with them an error of their own; they may be correctly stated, and still lead to wrong conclusions. Of the reader's personal error nothing need be said. The sum of such inevitable errors must be considerable. At the most moderate estimate the historian can hardly expect that four out of five of his statements of fact shall be exact. On an average every history contains at least one assertion of fact to every line. A history like that of Macaulay contains much more than one hundred and fifty thousand assertions or assumptions of fact. If the rule holds good, at least thirty thousand of these so-called facts must be more or less inexact. In regard to events of earlier history or of less familiar societies, the necessary error must be much greater.

The historian is properly responsible only for his own personal error, but this he can never calculate, since it is hopelessly confused with the conditions of his education, his society, and his age. His personal tricks of thought or manner he may sometimes recognize. One can imagine that Gibbon and Macaulay might even have been greatly annoyed by their own mannerism, had they been of a nervous temperament; but their personal error would have remained the same. Some historians are more, some less, inaccurate; but the best must always stand in terror of the blunders which no precaution and no anxiety for truth can save him from committing.

This subject acquires serious interest to any one who undertakes to teach or write upon History, because, of all objects of study, human beings are the most complicated and least easily

understood. They do not even understand themselves. They habitually deceive themselves about their own motives. The most respectable and the most honest are seen in politics engaged in transactions which, from another point of view, seem to imply the want of a moral sense. Their evidence is rarely conclusive. If, to this confusion of error, the personal error of the historian is added, the result becomes an inextricable mess. Almost every great criminal in history has been defended with more or less force, and almost every example of lofty virtue has been more or less successfully attacked. After two thousand years of hot dispute, society to-day is still hotly disputing the characters of the Gracchi, of Cicero, of Brutus, and of Julius Cæsar, while that of Oliver Cromwell shakes the credit of a ministry.

Conscious of the pitfalls that surround him, the writer of history can only wait in silent hope that no one will read him, — at least with too much attention. He knows the worst. He has taken some patriot at his own estimate, and condemned some traitor at the estimate of the patriot! He has misread some document, adding his own blunder to the deception intended by the author of the document! He has accepted, as authority, an official statement, made, for once, without intent to deceive; and thus, thrown off his guard by the evident absence of dishonest intention, he has fallen into the blunder of taking a government at its own low estimate of itself.

One of these blunders, which is fortunately of so little consequence as to allow of attaching a story to it, will be found in Volume II., page 186, of the *History of the First Administration of Madison*. Special students of American history may remember the curious episode of John Henry in 1812, who got fifty thousand dollars from Mr. Madison for revealing the intrigues which the Boston Federalists had not had with the British government. Opinions differed then, and probably differ still, as to the value of John Henry's papers, but few persons would differ about the value of John Henry himself. He was a political blackmailer; an adventurer; and, like a good many of his political superiors, more or less of a liar; yet, on the whole, want of truth was not one of his strongest peculiarities. Indeed, except for the overestimate of his own services, the statements made by Henry were reasonably exact. The *History* has no quarrel with him.

A person who more interested society at the time, and is more amusing still, than John Henry, was an extraordinary Frenchman, who appeared suddenly, as Henry's patron, in Washington society, and figured conspicuously at the White House, at the French and

British Legations, and before a Congressional committee, disappearing as suddenly as he came, and leaving only the conviction that he was a rogue, and general perplexity to account for his presence in such a part of the world. The world naturally inferred that Savary, Duke de Rovigo, Napoleon's Minister of Police, was in the secret. The Frenchman was an agent of Napoleon's secret police. This inference became the accepted version of history. Among the French secretaries at Washington who knew the so-called Count Edward de Crillon was the Count Georges de Caraman, who published, forty years afterwards, in the *Revue Contemporaine* for August, 1852, an account of the affair, — an account authorized by Serurier, who, in 1812, was the French minister in Washington. Caraman, who might be supposed to know, expressly said that the man who called himself Crillon was found to be an agent of the Emperor's secret police. From Caraman's memoirs, the statement slipped naturally into the *History of the Administration of Madison*, where it stands on the page already cited.

In spite of Caraman's assertion, and in spite of the apparent safety of taking for granted that he knew what he said was known, the so-called Count Edward de Crillon seems not to have had any authority to act as a police agent. In that character he appears only as a volunteer. The French police were frequently in pursuit of him, but are not known to have availed themselves of his distinguished services. The statement made in the *History* should therefore be struck out, and, as no further conclusions were deduced from it, the error, unlike many other similar mistakes, stops there. Yet the correction, slight as it is, leads to another inquiry, which has little to do with the history of the United States, but opens a curious chapter of the social history of the world at the beginning of the century. If Count Edward de Crillon was not a secret agent of the French police, who was he, and how did it happen that he appeared and disappeared so dramatically in the diplomatic drama of the War of 1812?

A volume of the archives of the French Foreign Office, overlooked in the original search for documents relating to the United States, contains some papers relating to this matter, which seems at the time to have perplexed the French government almost as much as it annoyed Mr. Madison. The first of these papers is a letter from the Prefect of the Department of the Gers, in the south of France, written four years after Crillon's adventure in America, and directed to the Minister of Foreign Relations at Paris.

THE PREFECT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE GERS  
TO  
MONSEIGNEUR [THE DUKE DE RICHELIEU] THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN  
RELATIONS.<sup>1</sup>

PREFECTURE OF THE GERS,  
Auch, 1 March, 1816.

*Monseigneur :*

The nomination of M. Hyde de Neuville to the Legation of the United States has suggested to me the idea of putting under your Excellency's eyes some papers which were seized at the domicile of a Sr. Soubiran of Lectoure, and a knowledge of which may interest the mission of His Majesty's ambassador.

This Soubiran is an intriguer of the first order, who, being son of a goldsmith of Lectoure, has successively played the roles of Colonel, Consul, Ambassador, and Chevalier of all the Orders. Pursued by the imperial police whom he had disturbed from Spain to Hamburg by his political or financial expedients, he finished by reaching the United States, where he contracted a kind of intimacy with an Irish major named Henry, whose name your Excellency will doubtless remember to have seen figure in the quarrel of the United States with England. It seems that this Major, having been charged with some political exploration by the chiefs of the English army, sold the secret of his mission to President Madison, and the memoir of Soubiran seems to show him as intermediary in that negotiation, of which he doubtless allotted to himself a good part of the price, since he returned to France with 70,000 livres of bills of exchange from Consul Lescallier, who treated him with intimacy, as did also M. Serurier, then Minister of France in the United States.

As all this medley [*tripotage*] seems to me to have some relation with the respective efforts of the two American parties which then respectively cultivated or combatted the envoy of France, I have thought necessary to communicate to your Excellency the verbose and romantic memoir of Soubiran, in which the simple or impudent avowals may, to a certain point, offer a presumption of truth.

I am with respect, Monseigneur, your Excellency's very humble and very obedient servant,

The Prefect of the Gers,  
BROCHET DE DESIGNY.

If exactness of translation matters little, exact dates would be convenient, but the Prefect unfortunately did not mention whether Soubiran's papers had been just seized, or whether the seizure had taken place at some previous time. None of the papers seem to have been written later than 1814. The first is the memoir which the Prefect correctly described as

<sup>1</sup> *États Unis*, Supt. 2, 103.

verbose and romantic, but which he thought might to a certain point offer a presumption of truth. Most of Soubiran's papers offer only a presumption of untruth, but his account of the episode of Henry's documents can, to some extent, be tested by other evidence.

MEMOIR OF SOUBIRAN.<sup>1</sup>

*The Last Two Years of my Life.*

THE 1st August, 1810, after having sold furniture, I set out for Barèges. My health had no need of the mineral waters, but my purse had need of supplies. In consequence, I left Barèges for Bagnères, where, two hours after my arrival, I sacrificed to the *Tapis vert*, and, deceived for the hundredth time in my hopes, I saw myself a victim and was immolated on this stage of fortune. Nevertheless, I had the courage to remain until October 15, and, after having borrowed 600 francs from the Prefect Chazal, I quitted this place which had been so often disastrous to me and returned to my country. I arrived at Lectoure with 54 francs and a valet de chambre. My project was to pass the winter there, but when I learned that I was under suit for a bill of exchange from Paris, I determined to go to offer my services in Moldavia to the hospodar (Prince ———), with whom I had relations; and I remained only a few hours at Lectoure.

On arriving at Agen I had drawn 18 francs on my fund, and I had hired a small boat to Bordeaux for 72 francs, when my faithful valet came to join me at Port Ste. Marie, and to my great astonishment, brought me six double Louis that he borrowed of a certain lady whose loyal conduct will never be lost in my grateful heart.

A high and puissant seigneur, I reached Bordeaux, where I received the most amiable reception from all my friends. I left it, always filled with my great project. I stopped at Blois, where for two years I had maintained a correspondence with a charming woman (Madame de La-jonquière). I wanted to find out whether amiability or trickery [*rouerie*] formed the essence of her character; and, in consequence, a carriage was harnessed, and four post-horses conducted me to the Chateau de la Savonnière, whither a note and my Gilbert had already preceded me.

On leaping from my carriage, I was met by a man who seemed to me frank, loyal, and generous. "M. de Soubiran," he said to me, "how glad I am to see you, and how happy I should be if my wife, who is waiting for you in the parlor, could enjoy the same pleasure! but for twenty years past she has been blind! What happiness for us to receive among us him who protected our son in Spain—that poor Albert! He is prisoner in England! He was taken in the affair of Ta— Ta— eh! yes! Talavera!"

I knew nothing about it! No matter! We arrived in the salon, where

<sup>1</sup> *États Unis*, Supt. 2, 102.

I found Mme. de Latour with two priests, a perfect contrast with the master of the place. A face gentle, angelic ; an air of dignity ; the tone, the bearing of candor and of modesty ; which would have inspired me if I had not every moment been recalled to my gay humor by M. de Latour, who appeared like a Jean Bart, a De Ruyter. "Monsieur," said he, "if you listen to Madame, she will talk to you of all the noblesse of the Vendômois, of the Orléanais, of the Gâtinais, of the Court of Guise, and of Francis the First. She knows thoroughly her French history ; but I beg you ! — This affair belongs to these gentlemen. As for us, let us talk of war !" "But, monsieur," I said to him, "how is Mme. de la Jonquière ?" "She has been, for a month past, with Mme. de Staël. I have sent to inform her of your arrival, and if we do not all sup together this evening, to-morrow morning we shall breakfast together." Thereupon, supper was announced. "Monsieur is served," said Gilbert, who had already taken the direction of the household. But three or four great blows of the knocker announced the goddess of the chateau, who, after having embraced her mother, turned to me with the most proper and amiable tone and said : "Colonel, you will not be surprised at my impatience to come and receive at home the man who has deigned to protect that poor Albert, that good brother, tenderly cherished. Promise me to pass some months with us, and I shall believe that happiness has not totally deserted the Chateau de Savonière." I answered as I best could her charming politeness, but I could not weary of admiring her who spoke to me. In truth, I was transported ; I was among the angels ; I thought myself in fairyland. My costume suggested the adventurer a little [*prêtait un peu à l'aventure*] and my Frontin showed an alacrity for Madame which made it clear to the priests that he thought he was serving the future wife of his master. At length, the conversation turned on the Church. I edified everybody and became the idol of the mother. I made loud responses to the prayer, while Gilbert prayed like the rest, and we were on the road to canonization.

Soon I was presented to all the neighboring gentry, and I always ordered a post-chaise which seated Monsieur and Madame and Gilbert. Everybody talked of our future marriage, but I knew there was nothing in it. Finally, after having finished my projects, and colored with a pretext a loan of which I had need, I set out post for Paris.

The next day I arrived at the capital. I feared to remain there. My debts frightened me. I feared that my creditor there would prove less magnanimous than the noble family at La Savonière. I set out for Senlis, leaving Gilbert behind with two notes for two charming women, Mlle. Millières and Mme. Éléonore. They accepted my invitation and I spent for them 240 francs out of the sixteen louis that remained to me. It mattered much to me that two women *à la mode* should say in the *grand monde* that I was always generous and full of good graces. From there I went to Saint Omer and then to Roye, where my faithful Gilbert made acquaintance with the driver of a coach who was taking to Brussels Mme. de Mirecour, former canoness, who had just gained a lawsuit at Paris. Without tell-

ing me anything beforehand, Frontin woke me at four o'clock in the morning, by crying out : "Monsieur, they are harnessing the horses !" I get up ; the bill is paid ; and I seat myself in a handsome carriage by the side of a heavenly woman. I saluted her so modestly that she afterwards told me the impression it had made on her. I will not enter into a longer detail ; it will be enough to know that her house became my hotel during a fortnight that I remained in Brussels. For my journey in Holland I had to accept a cabriolet, a box of wine, and Gilbert had 50 louis that were lent him for me.

I arrived at Amsterdam, where my stay offered nothing remarkable. Frontin went to visit Mme. de Mémoire. He promised to bring me to her, and was presented with a hundred ducats of which he said that I had need. I visited Groningen and arrived at the seashore ; there I found Admiral Devanter, who was my intimate at Paris. I saw, and was presented by him to General Miollis. He gave me letters for the generals of brigade who were at Emden, where I was received as Prince Frederick would have been if the garrison had been Prussian. I was lodged with the richest merchant ; I gave fêtes ; the generals and all the officers came to them ; the music of the regiment played all night, and I lost harmoniously all my money. That honest banker offered me some ; I accepted it ; and after two weeks' stay I came to Oldenburg, bearer of a letter for General Soligny. I passed there two days and dined alternately with the General and with the Prince, who sent me in one of his carriages as far as Bremen, where I had calculated a stroke of contraband which would have brought me 80,000 francs. But the secret ways of Providence confound the projects of mortals. Accordingly I had to quit Bremen and go to Hamburg. The evening of my arrival I gained a thousand ducats ; the next day I won again, so that my stay in that city was the subject of every conversation. I was summoned by the Governor,—the antagonist of the Prince of Sweden. "I am on my way to Stockholm," I told him, "to claim or solicit service." "Where are your orders?" "I am going to deserve them." My answers did not appear to him conclusive ; he ordered two gendarmes to keep watch on me. The evening of the next day I shook off the yoke, abandoning at midnight my wardrobe and my money. I took without knowing it the road to Copenhagen ; I made ten German leagues on foot, and hired a carriage which took me to Kiel, where I presented myself to the Maréchal de Lowendal. Some recommendations for Copenhagen, and 250 guineas, put me in condition to continue my journey. I visited Stockholm without succeeding in my projects. I came to Gottenburg, and from there to Frederikstad. I visited devoutly the tomb of Charles XII. ; and the 15th March I embarked for Carolina. Hardly ten days at sea we were taken by the *Formidable*, an English seventy-four. I was a passenger, and Spanish, I said ; so I obtained liberty to go to London. I recalled to mind that the man, who, two days before quitting in 1801 the city of Paris, had won from me 30,000 francs, and who the next day, having lost £10,000, ran away without paying me,—I recalled, I say, that he lived in London, and



I resolved to make him fight, or to obtain an indemnity. I called on the father of the young man ; I made my demand, and complained of his want of delicacy with so much force that the son took it up with insolence. On my promise to fight a duel with him the father gave me an order on the bank, at sight, begging me not to pay attention to his son, or he would call in the police. "I am all right, sir," I said, "and here is my permit of residence in London." Then I showed him my Spanish permit, which luckily he did not read. The next day I was waked by order of this brave young man who waited me in the park. I loaded him with insults, and my quarrel changed object. I put a pistol-ball through his shoulder, and got as recompense the order to quit London under penalty of transportation. I made nothing of it, and came to Brighton.

I was on the point of departure for the United States when M. de Crillon Partorias, with whom I had relations, begged me not to abandon him. I was entirely master of his mind ; I read him the Holy Scriptures, more devout than the Grand Inquisitor. Soon he had gout in his stomach and made me heir, by testament, of his name, of all his property, and of twelve hundred quadruples [doubloons]. This adventure made some noise. The ambassador wanted to have the will broken, but it was in good form.

Then I quitted Brighton and went to the Isle of Wight, where I remained incognito until the moment when I sailed for the continent of America. I made acquaintance with the passengers. Of this number was Major Henry, a young Irishman, a very handsome man, but with an air of melancholy showing some secret trouble. Soon our acquaintance became intimate, and after some weeks of voyage we confided in each other our most secret thoughts.

"For twenty years," said he, "I have lived in America, where I was taken under the care of a rich and powerful uncle named Keane. Quite early I pronounced against republics. The English government was not slow in offering me employment. Young, ambitious, I seized the opportunity, and at first went to Quebec, where I agreed with the Governor of Canada on my plan of conduct. I had served in the American army ; I had many partisans there. Since my marriage I had studied law ; and I was about to succeed in dividing the five States of the north, — in separating them from the American Union, — when the affair of the *Chesapeake* occurred. After that event I returned to England, where I was invited to go back and continue under George Prevost what I had commenced under his predecessor ; but my enthusiasm was destroyed. I had visited Ireland, and seen her destruction ; our palaces turned into prisons, our mansions into barracks, and our best citizens loaded with the chains of despotism."

I profited by this avowal. I discovered the discontent that seemed to animate him, and I turned to the profit of France what was intended to destroy her cause. I neglected neither promises nor hopes, and at last, master of all the correspondence, of the official despatches, I reached the continent of America. Arrived at Boston, I wrote to the ambassador my situation and the treasure of which I was depositary. I received from him

the most flattering letter and the invitation to go to Washington, the seat of government. I arrived there and was at once presented to the President and all the ministers. The French Legation became my hotel, and when the government offered a million to possess the treasure, I offered it for nothing. — “Restore me to France! Let me die in my country — close the eyes of my old mother — there is my recompense, one that no treasure could equal!” All was solemnly promised me. I fought with Thompson, with Derby. I saw the Embargo decreed which was to famish the army of Portugal; and, made bearer of despatches by the government and by the French ambassador, I set out to present myself to the Duke de Bassano. After a long but fortunate passage, after having burned at sea several English and Spanish vessels, I was set ashore at Santander. I deposited my despatches with the French Consul, and put to sea again to reach Sauterne (?). A column of two thousand men escorted me in safety to Bayonne, where, when I was stepping into my carriage, I was recognized by a vile saddler whom I had the bad luck not to employ. Gendarmes seized my despatches, my gold, my effects, my servants; and I was alone, flying persecution, tyranny. When I looked for the highest recompense, I found myself naked, despoiled, and prevented from rendering account to his Majesty of the important situation of the United States, of the wishes of the Canadians, of the inhabitants of Nova Scotia; and a warrant issued against me obliges me to appear a criminal or a coward when I am far from either of these hypotheses.

Mr. Dervilliers, never could an agent of England have served his ministry better!!! What is to be done! I groan and I suffer. I wait an answer from the government, and I must add this loss to those I have already suffered. The American government will indemnify me; but I fear that it may turn its arms, and that its system, reuniting itself with the English system, may make the imbecile agents of so many disasters repent. This is what pains and afflicts me, and what destroys the fruit of my labors beyond the Atlantic. The wretches, dividing my spoils, will dig the tomb of the French cause in America, and I shall cry out with truth (since they believe me to be loaded with gold): *Auri sacra fames, quid non mortalia pectora cogis!!*

#### *Conclusions.*

I left Lectoure with 54 francs and I have travelled like a prince, covering more than 7000 leagues in the two worlds. Except one apostolic day, I have always had a good carriage and at least three domestics. During my residence in America, I always had a deposit of near \$40,000 in the Bank of the United States. There remained to me, after having finished my operations, a carriage valued at 11,000 francs, at least; before my disaster at Bayonne, effects or money, 50,000 francs; in letters of change, one of 69,000 francs, the other of 84,000. Total, 214,000 francs, with which I was withdrawing to my country, happy to have served it, and hoping from the French government a reimbursement of 200,000 francs

that I had spent, without ever having received a sous from any government whatever. Who will undertake an equal task and obtain the same success? It will not be I! Nevertheless, I leave, still, friends and claims on the continent. Yet I am here, unhappy and without a sous. I have been wrecked in port, like a bad pilot; but I can only admire the secret ways of Providence, and in my ecstasy, I cry, *O Altitude!!!*

Soubiran was a lineal descendant from that society which the Spaniards called *picaresque*, and which had a literature of its own. The French adopted it from Spain, and Gil Blas made it famous throughout the world. Soubiran was a Gascon, and must have been a more or less plausible rogue; for, although his stories contradicted themselves in every other sentence, and were so numerous, so long, and so detached that he could, with the best of memories, hardly have repeated any one of them accurately, he lived in an age of adventurers far more successful than himself, and seems never to have been publicly exposed in the good society whose scrutiny he challenged. At Washington, he went directly to his minister, Serurier, who should have penetrated his character at once, yet Serurier wrote despatch on despatch about him, without once seeming to appreciate that the man was merely a common swindler. Serurier's letters were hardly less amusing than Soubiran's impostures.

#### SERURIER TO THE DUKE DE BASSANO.<sup>1</sup>

No. 45.

WASHINGTON, 8 Feby., 1812.

*Monseigneur:*

I received, some time ago, a letter dated from Boston, signed Édouard de Crillon, in which this traveller informed me that he had escaped from England, that he had just arrived in the United States, and that on his journey he had had the good fortune to form an acquaintance with a person employed by the English government in a secret mission to New England; had become master of his secret, of his papers, and that they were of a nature to produce an immediate explosion between America and Great Britain; and that he had sworn to make me their depository. The letter was of a style somewhat romantic, and although the traveller's name was certainly very fine and very French, it might cover a trap, and I thought that everything which came from England should be received by me with great circumspection. The traveller begged me to send my answer to New York under cover to the Consul General, whom he would see in passing. I wrote to M. Lescallier to examine the new arrival; to send him to me if he was in fact M. de Crillon; and in the contrary

<sup>1</sup> *États Unis*, Supt. 2, 95.

case to dissuade his coming. M. de Crillon arrived here ten days ago. He came to see me. He talked to me with enthusiasm of his Majesty the Emperor ; of the happy times when he had the honor of serving him ; of his own faults ; of the wrongs of which he felt himself the object, and which, reducing him to despair, had led him to fly to England in want of a better asylum. He told me that there he had received letters from his family which made known to him the just anger of his Imperial Majesty, and which gave him to understand that he could hope for no pardon unless he quitted that enemy's country and went to wait, in America, the return of the imperial favor which his family would not cease to implore ; that when in London he had met Baron d'Ebeut, aide-de-camp of the Prince Regent, whom he had formerly seen in Germany, and who, having recognized him, made him every sort of caress and the offer, difficult to refuse in his position, of presenting him to his Royal Highness. He says that the Prince Regent received him with every possible kindness, and, judging that in his disgrace he might be disposed to change sides, offered him the command of the Legion of Estremadura. M. de Crillon had in his hands the letter in which M. d'Ebeut reiterates to him this offer, in the most flattering terms. M. de Crillon says that he answered the Prince Regent (in the impossibility of giving a positive refusal, which would very certainly have compromised his safety) that he would reflect on the proposition that his Royal Highness deigned to make him, and that he would at once let M. d'Ebeut know his decision. From that moment M. de Crillon says he had no other thought than flight ; no other intentions than that of obeying the views of his family and the inspirations of honor, which did not permit him to make a longer stay among the enemies of his sovereign. A famous hunt [*chasse*] was preparing in Scotland ; he announced that he would be there ; he hired an apartment in London for six months, and profiting by the security which these demonstrations should inspire, he went secretly to the Isle of Wight, where he knew that a ship was going to sail for America, and he embarked. . . .

To some extent, Serurier was blinded by his own suspicions. He could imagine no theory to account for this extraordinary personage who bore one of the best names in France, except that he was a British political agent. The British minister, Foster, could see in him only a French agent. The idea that he might be merely a private gambler and swindler was so improbable that they did not readily grasp it. As for Madison and Monroe, whose knowledge of such characters was small, and who found themselves in the hands of two adventurers at once, when one would have been more than enough, they seem to have taken Soubiran quite seriously. Even Gallatin made no apparent protest. They were blinded, in their turn, by the unquestionable genuineness of Henry's documents. Crillon asked nothing, and professed sub-

lime unselfishness. He seems, in fact, to have contented himself with only a thousand dollars of the fifty thousand which Henry got from the United States Treasury. The rest of his money must have come from other sources, and perhaps was really gained, as he said, by making an imbecile old man sign a will in his favor. Probably there was a certain amount of truth in his representation that his chief object was to obtain readmission to France. Harebrained as such adventurers are apt to be, he may have hoped to win the favor of the French police by rendering a service to French diplomacy. He certainly won Serurier's favor, who did his best to help the man, and, to judge from Caraman's version of the story, was ashamed of it afterwards. Serurier obliged Crillon to narrate a foolish farrago about the cause of his disgrace with the Emperor, and gravely reported it all to his government. Serurier himself added something very near a recommendation to favor : —

SERURIER TO THE DUKE DE BASSANO.<sup>1</sup>

No. 46.

WASHINGTON, 18 Feby., 1812.

. . . This, Monseigneur, is what M. Crillon has been willing to reveal to me. Your Excellency will understand that I have no means of verifying it. Moreover, I see no absolute necessity for verifying it, as M. Crillon asks nothing of me. Why should I have taken a trouble of that kind? Only in France can one know what truth there is in his version, and only there can it be judged. . . . I have presented him nowhere. I have publicly declared that the motive of my reserve in this respect was that he had not, according to usage, brought letters from your Excellency. I have made this declaration before the whole ministry ; but as he has been received and dined [*accueilli, fêté*] at the President's and by all the ministers, I have thought that, in order not to discredit the offer he made to the administration, I should occasionally receive him myself. I have, therefore, received him, but at the same time repeating that it was not as a Frenchman, since I could not do so owing to my official ignorance of his position as regarded my Court ; but as a man who, as the government of the Republic declared to me, had rendered it a signal service.

On arriving at Washington, M. Crillon, to escape better the suspicions of Mr. Foster, thought proper to call upon him. He even dined there, but this British minister, who had probably been informed of his brusque flight from England, said to the other guests, at the moment he left the room : "There is a spy of the Emperor !" This was told to M. de Crillon, who wrote on the instant the harshest and most insulting letter to Mr. Foster that ever was read. The latter answered with a moderation assuredly very

<sup>1</sup> *États Unis*, Supt. 2, 98.

rare. This correspondence being shown by M. Crillon to all the ministers has made Mr. Foster ridiculous in all eyes. Since that time M. Crillon has never set foot in his house, and has kept up the same line of conduct. He always speaks with the same enthusiasm of the Emperor, of his love for France and his family with the liveliest tenderness. He appears to regret his faults, whatever they may be. I received him at first with extreme distrust and put myself quite beyond reach of any trap, giving nothing in writing and sending him to the Secretary of State. But I must admit that I believe now in the sincerity of M. Crillon's regrets. Not but that there is always something of romance in his stories, sometimes contradiction in the details of his adventures. But it seems to me very hard to doubt the substance. The man has such an exaltation of brain, he shows so delicate a sense of honor, that one cannot suppose him engaged in a double intrigue. Moreover, it could be only the American government that could be deceived. I have declared to Mr. Monroe that I guaranteed nothing ; that it was for him to verify the documents that I have not even asked to see, and to establish their authenticity. Every verification has been made. They have compared the English seals and the known handwritings. Mr. Pinkney, Attorney-General, recently arrived from England where he was Minister of the Republic, has been called in. He has verified everything. The greater part of the facts contained in that correspondence were known to him, and there remains no doubt in the mind of the administration.

. . . The bargain was concluded on the 7th. The papers are in the hands of Mr. Monroe. Mr. Henry at first asked £25,000 sterling, and the Secretary of State granted it ; but on examining the affair afterwards with the Secretary of the Treasury, it appeared that the President could not dispose of more than \$50,000 for secret service. Mr. Monroe offered to give that amount first, and to pay the rest after publication, with the necessary approval of Congress. This clause displeased Mr. Henry, who declared that he would rather burn the papers than haggle over them so. As he is a very violent man, they took alarm. M. Crillon said that he thought the price too high, and that he would persuade his friend to come down to £18,000 sterling, but the same difficulty remained for the £8000 in excess of the \$50,000. Mr. Monroe put the whole negotiation into his hands. Mr. Henry remained inflexible. M. Crillon announced that he would supply this deficit by his estate of St. Martial in Spain which he valued at 200,000 francs, and which he ceded to his friend. As I found this proceeding a little too handsome to be natural, and as I showed some astonishment, M. Crillon told me that he considered the success of that affair as the only means of recovering the good graces of his Majesty, and that, with this idea, nothing cost too much ; moreover, that he thought he could wait until the Republic should indemnify him for this sacrifice. I thought it not my business to exaggerate doubts on such motives, and said no more.

Mr. Henry has gone to New York, whence he is to sail within a few days on a government vessel. He had asked to pass to England, under pretext of business, and to make talk of this event through the channel of

his friends. Mr. Monroe communicated this project to me. I told him that this seemed to me too refined for its object; that letters would do quite as well; that Mr. Foster, informed of his arrival here, must have notified them in London, and that I saw no attraction that could make him want to go to a country where, supposing he had acted in good faith here, he would risk being hanged. The project seems to be given up. He will be sent to France. . . . M. Crillon has gone to Philadelphia, where he proposes to pass three or four days with Count Pahlen, last minister of Russia in America, and who has not yet started for Brazil. He knows the Count and announces that he is going to talk about his brother who is in the Russian service. On his return he has promised to hand me the memoir which he addresses to your Excellency by my advice.

Serurier's letter was written February 18. At that time both John Henry and Crillon were in Philadelphia, whither they had gone after concluding their bargain on the 7th, and obtaining the Treasury warrants for \$50,000, dated and paid on February 10. Henry went on to New York and sailed for France on the sloop-of-war *Wasp*, March 10. Crillon returned to Washington and wrote letters for France.

SERURIER TO THE DUKE DE BASSANO.<sup>1</sup>

*Monseigneur:*

I have the honor to address to your Excellency the letter that M. de Crillon wrote to M. the Duke of Elchingen. I have thought it best that whatever relates to this affair should pass through your Excellency. For the same reason I permit myself to place under this cover two other letters written by that officer, one to his Highness Monseigneur the Vice Grand Elector, and one to the Minister of General Police.

I am, etc.,

SERURIER.

WASHINGTON, 24 Feb., 1812.

The letter to Ney is a long medley, without present interest, and bearing no date. The letters to Sieyès and Savary are more curious. For some reason best known to himself, Soubiran dated them at Philadelphia, — although on those days he was in Washington, — and signed himself, not Crillon, but Émile Édouard.

SOUBIRAN TO THE VICE GRAND ELECTOR SIEYÈS.<sup>1</sup>

PHILADELPHIA, 5 Feby., 1812.

*Monseigneur:*

Your Highness had sent me to Malta with Méchin. This was a crime in the eyes of the Directory. The hatred of Barras

<sup>1</sup> *États Unis*, Supt. 2, 100.    <sup>2</sup> *États Unis*, Supt. 2, 94.

pursued me ; prejudiced Regnaud and Vaubois against me ; I was threatened with arrest ; I should have been arrested, and then shot, if my friend Subervie had not warned me. I was then at Cività Vecchia. The unfavorable impressions have followed the subsequent government. Younger, more adroit, I had carried off some mistress from the Director ; I had thrashed that scamp Davis, who was his aide-de-camp. *Inde iræ !*

Since that time I have been voluntarily in the army. I have been employed there as a superior officer by Belliard and Ney, and I was bearer of a letter from Lannes to be named by King Joseph his confidential aide-de-camp. I arrived. I was, perhaps, not enough of a courtier. I went straight to my new master. The Sasignys, the Jourdans, etc., took umbrage. I was forgotten. My letters remained without answer, and I was dropped. Nevertheless, I was despatched to his Imperial Majesty at Bordeaux. I warned him of the rage of the Spaniards, of their infamous plans, and their audacious courage, the disastrous effects of which tended to nothing less than to plunge France into mourning and despair. I received the order to withdraw, but I enjoyed the indelible happiness of delaying the entrance into Spain, where I had rendered a thousand services to the cause of his Majesty.

Since that time a mark for an infinity of persecutions, I have been obliged to quit France and assume every sort of mask. When shall I obtain the favor of returning to my country ? This harrowing idea paralyzes all my actions.

Your attachment to the person of his Majesty obliges me to inform your Highness that there will arrive on the continent an audacious English agent named Major St. Adrien or Major Henry. For more ample information, I shall have the honor to write to your Highness on the departure of the vessel which will carry this savage [*ce barbare*].

I am occupied here in causing war to be declared against the English, in overcoming the apathy of this government, and in making the English minister decamp. What I can do I hope to announce to your Highness within twenty days. I will write you then in great detail. I am obliged at present to do it in a great hurry.

No indiscretion or inquiries ! The good that comes in sleep, — one does not inform oneself of the hour it will arrive.

Your very respectful

ÉMILE ÉDOUARD.

This secret denunciation of Henry adds another touch to the comedy of Crillon. One is at a loss to understand precisely what idea was in the writer's mind, but probably it was nothing more than to give himself importance in the eyes of the French police ; for the letter to Savary, the Emperor's Minister of Police, repeated the warning.



SOUBIRAN TO THE DUKE DE ROVIGO.<sup>1</sup>

PHILADELPHIA, 10 Feby., 1812.

*Monseigneur :*

I love the Emperor as much as you. I have a thousand times exposed my life, and have never received or required recompense. Your Excellency will recall my letters from Bagnères, my last from Hamburg. I desire that your Excellency should some day bear in mind that nothing is dearer to me than my country, and that I am the most zealous and the most faithful subject of Napoleon the Great.

*Confidentially.*

I have only time to inform your Excellency that there will arrive on the coasts of France a man, agent of England, bearing the name of Major St. Adrien, or Major Henry, about thirty-six years old, blond, about 5 feet 9 inches in height, who must be put under surveillance and severely confined. He knows how to take all colors, and is sent to commit the most frightful crime [*attentat.*]

I dog his steps, and I will inform your Excellency of his determination, of the name of the vessel and of the captain with whom he crosses the Atlantic.

I hope before April 1st to have decided this country to war with England. I shall have the honor to inform you of it. Your Excellency will know how to reward a devoted servant and a faithful subject.

ÉMILE ÉDOUARD.

Your Excellency will remember that I was Colonel on the staff and met you travelling ; but you will never know to what a point my devotion goes ! Above all — discretion ! It is necessary that I should succeed, and my confidence has no other interest connected with you than that of interesting you in order that I may be permitted to finish my days in my country when I shall have recourse to your goodness. Any indiscretion on your part destroys my success, and it will be your fault alone that the English party is not entirely annihilated.

Beside these letters, Soubiran wrote another, and a long one, to Maret, Duke de Bassano, Napoleon's Minister for Foreign Affairs. This letter, which is dated Washington, February 22, 1812, contains a further tissue of inventions, but is remarkable for the strange impudence with which the writer challenged his fate with the police. He not only signed himself Édouard de Crillon, but claimed permission to return to France in consideration of the sacrifice he had made of his estate of St. Martial — an estate which the Duke de Bassano, in a few moments, by inquiry from

<sup>1</sup> *États Unis*, Supt. 2, 97.

the Duke de Crillon, could and did assure himself never existed ; and not content with this, he begged the Duke de Bassano to unite with the Duke d'Elchingen "who has been witness of my military conduct," — which the Duke d'Elchingen, in still less time, would declare wholly imaginary.

Such was the actual result. Soubiran sailed from New York, May 28, 1812, and on his arrival at Bayonne was promptly arrested. His subsequent adventures are unknown, but among the papers seized by the police at some later persecution of this interesting citizen was the draft of a letter written, or intended to be written, to John Henry in 1814. Apparently both of them were in Paris in the early part of July of that year. Soubiran was dogging Henry, presumably to get money from him, for Soubiran was then penniless and could hardly have had any other object. Nevertheless, through Soubiran's rags, the old tone of Gascon grandiloquence talked as loftily as ever. The nature of the transaction which he proposed to Henry is something for the curious seekers of puzzles to explain if they can ; but certainly one would like to know whether Monroe ever gave him the smallest hope of obtaining more money from the United States Treasury.

#### SOUBIRAN TO HENRY.<sup>1</sup>

. . . July, 1814.

*Sir :*

When I wrote to you in America, you were in Paris ; this is doubtless the reason why I have never heard from you. I have no need to tell you how much I have been annoyed not to have been able to get an interview with you, although I followed you step by step for more than two hours, the evening of Saturday, July 2, at the moment when you were talking with a woman, doubtless on important affairs,—for I had neither the power nor the faculty to wait longer than midnight. Nor was I sure it was you, since I thought I saw you with a black band over one eye, which I learned with regret that you had lost. Now I turn to our affairs. When I had the pleasure of meeting you at Ryde in the Isle of Wight, I was in hiding from everybody. The decree of death that Buonaparte had issued against me rested on my head. I had avoided it at Hamburg only by getting rid of a gendarme. Bernadotte refused me an asylum ; set a price on my head to please the puissant idol of the world ; and I had no doubt that emissaries of that savage would have conceived the plan of destroying me in England if I had been discovered in that situation. Hidden in the shadow of my mother's name, we became friends ! You complained to me of the British government. I told you all I had suffered from that of Napoleon ; and we conceived the project—you, of revenging yourself on

<sup>1</sup> *États Unis*, Supt. 2, 102.

those who had, as you said, outraged your interests ; while I found it best, since it enabled me, not indeed to return to favor with a monster whom I have always detested, but at last to reopen the door of that fair France which I never found elsewhere in my travels.

It is useless for me to recapitulate here all I did to obtain the result which brought you fifty thousand dollars. I sacrificed my existence, all that man holds most sacred. You lent me a sum of some thousand dollars, which it is out of my power to repay, since Vigaroux, who kept rather a large amount for me, died my debtor, and I can obtain none of it. In this situation you set out for Europe, and I remained exposed to all the vexations of the two parties ; a mark for all their sarcasms. I had to fight with Willing, with Colonel Roussel, and I was nearly assassinated in New York by an English party.

You were at Paris when I sailed, bringing an order enclosed in Monroe's despatches for Barlow to pay me 84,000 francs ; but instead of coming to Paris, I was arrested on landing ; all my effects were seized ; my properties were sold ; and my brother was thrown into prison, whence he came out only a few weeks ago. In this frightful situation, I did not know to what saint to turn. England could not offer me an asylum ; yet I was constrained to go there, after being shipwrecked at Gibraltar ; and on my arrival, though I travelled under my own name, I was recognized, and Foster instructed the government of all my movements. I was taken at Abbé Roufigny's, Castle Street, and thrown into the prisons of Tothillfields, where I remained 213 days because I refused to tell what would have irrevocably destroyed you (even at Paris). Returned to my country, deprived of all assistance, I learn that you have complained of me ; and of what, I pray ? Because I have not destroyed you in England ? because I have caused you to get fifty thousand dollars in America ? finally, because I still persist in my loyal conduct towards you ? Oh, if it is those thousand dollars that you gave me when you were gorged with gold ! then I shall say to you : *Ad impossibile nemo tenetur*, since I have no longer a sous ; but if you want the despatches that I had saved with the order of Monroe to count me down that sum, even if you want to return to America, I offer it to you, and, in offering it, I do all I can do, since I have never mixed in your affair except to gain a right to return to my country, which the return of my sovereign has incontestably restored to me.

This is, sir, all I can do in this affair, and you will have the goodness to return me the effects of mine which you have, and my declarations of relinquishment. On my part, I should have crossed the Atlantic only to preserve the most flattering idea of you ; but if, contrary to my expectation, you reject this arrangement, do not blame me for taking the step of publishing my situation with all your letters, notably that in which you tell me that I am an extraordinary man since I have decided those wretches, that you have seduced, to keep their word, and that all your ambition is that we may meet in Paris to laugh at the expense of these wretches, who tremble for a bagatelle of ten thousand pounds sterling ! — What a government !!!

I am much of your mind ; but I think, too, that nobody will blame me for the course which I should be obliged to take, and which I have till now refused to take, for considerations which were personal to you and were equally repugnant to my delicacy and my honor.

Obliged to quit Paris for some time, I have charged M. —— with my full powers to terminate this affair. When I return to the city, I shall be happy to renew an acquaintance formed under very unfortunate auspices, but such as have always opened for the future the perspective of what one may attain when one is aided by your counsels and your genius. I beg you never to doubt the distinguished sentiments entertained for you during life by

Your very, etc.,

E.

HENRY ADAMS.